

Message Text

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21

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SUBJ: DAHO-NIGERIAN COOPERATION ON SUGAR AND CEMENT PROJECTS

REF A. LAGOS 6484 B. STATE 155385 C. COTONOU 39 D. COTONOU 12

1. EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO ADD TO THOSE IN REF A REGARDING PRESENT STATE OF DAHO-NIGERIAN COOPERATION ON SUGAR AND CEMENT PROJECTS IN DAHOMEY.

2. RE QUESTION WHETHER JOINT DAHOMEAN-NIGERIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION SET UP DURING GOWON VISIT TO DAHOMEY LAST JAN HAS EVER MET, WE CAN CONFIRM THAT FIRST MEETING TOOK PLACE COTONOU IN MID JAN (SEE REF C AND MEMCON AMB'S CONVERSATION WITH NIGERIAN AMB DATED 21 JAN, COPIES PUCHED DEPT AND LAGOS). ACCORDING TO BRIEF ITEM IN DAHO-EXPRESS OF JAN 14, NIGERIAN DEL AT FIRST MEETING WAS HEADED BY MR OBATOYINBO. AT THAT TIME, IT WAS DECIDED TO SPLIT INTO TWO COMMISSIONS, ONE FOR CEMENT PLANT AND ONE FOR SUGAR PROJECT. WE HAD SEVERAL REPORTS THAT A SECOND MEETING INVOLVING BOTH COMMISSION TOOK PLACE IN LAGOS IN MAY OR JUNE.

3. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT FOUR MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMISSION ON CEMENT--TWO DAHOMENAS AND TWO NIGERIANS--LEFT FOR PARIS, BONN AND COOPENHAGEN LAST SUNDAY, 6 JULY TO MEET WITH THE THREE EUROPEAN FIRMS INTERESTED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CEMENT PLANT NEAR ONIGBOLO IN EASTERN DAHOMEY. FIRMS IN QUESTION ARE CIMENTS LAFARGE OF FRANCE, KRUPP OF FED REP OF GERMANY,

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AND F L SMIDTH OF DENMARK. JOINT COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE

REPORTEDLY IN EUROPE TO DISCUSS WITH THE FIRMS THEIR ORIGINAL OFFERS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT PLANT. (FYI; A DAHOMEAN MEMBER OF JOINT COMMISSION FOR CEMENT PLANT INFORMS US THAT AN AMERICAN COMPANY INTERESTED IN THIS PROJECT, ARTHUR G MCKEE OF CHICAGO, WAS DROPPED FROM CONSIDERATION SINCE IT WANTED TO RE-DO A TECHNICAL STUDY DONE BY A UN EXPERT ON THE CALCIUM DEPOSIT AT CEMENT PLANT SITE; THE DAHOMEAN CLAIMED PERFORMANCE OF THIS SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY WOULD UNNECESSARILY DELAY REALIZATION OF PROJECT. END FYI)

WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT WORK OF SEPARATE COMMISSION ON SUGAR PROJECT HAS NOT YET PROGRESSSED TO STAGE OF DICKERING WITH CONTRACTORS. OUR INFO IS THAT THE NIGERIANS WANT FURTHER TESTS OF CROP YIELDS FROM SUGAR CANE FIELDS TO DETERMINE FEASIBILITY OF A LARGE SUGAR PLANTATION. IF THIS IS TRUE, IT WILL BE AT LEAST 12 TO 18 MONTHS BEFORE RESULTS OF TESTS WILL BE AVAILABLE, THUS DELAYING COMMENCEMENT OF WORK ON PROJECT. WE BELIEVE NEED PERFORM FURTHER TESTS EXPLAINS WHY JOINT COMMISSION SEEMS TO BE IN LESS OF HURRY TO FIND CONTRACTOR FOR SUGAR COMPLEX THAN FOR CEMENT PLANT.

5. WYB WAS INFORMED YESTERDAY BY MIN OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND TOURISM (CAPT ANDRE ATCHADE) THAT THE TWO DAHO-NIGERIAN COMMISSIONS HAD DROPPED LANG AND MCKEE FROM CONSIDERATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SURAG AND CEMENT PROJECTS. MIN MADE THAT COMMENT, IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, WHEN HE WAS IN MIDST OF DIATRIBE AGAINST AMERICAN FIRMS, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "ALL UNFAIR TO DAHOMEY, THEY TREAT US AS IF WE WERE ROBBERS". MIN IMPLIED THAT EUROPEAN FIRMS WERE IN RUNNING FOR CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS FOR THE TWO PROJECTS.

6. COMMENT: BELIEVE ATCHADE MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY AU COURANT RE DETAILS OF DELIBERATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMISSIONS SINCE HAS FAULTY PICTURE OF SOME OTHER PROJECTS. WE WOULD THEREFORE NOT YET CONCLUDE THAT LANG HAS DEFINITELY BEEN JETTISONED. ON OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NOTED THAT IN RECENT WEEKS NIGERIAN AMB HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS ANY PARTICULARS OF EITHER PROJECT. THIS COULD SIGNIFY BAD NEWS FOR INTERESTED AMERICAN FIRMS. WE WILL PROBE FURTHER AT FORNMIN, AMONG NIGERIAN DIPLOMATS AND WITH A FEW OTHER CONTACTS IN EFFORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO FIND OUT WHERE LANG STANDS AND WHO NIGERIAN COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE. END COMMENT.
ENGLE

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